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THE COLUMBARIUM OF POMPONIUS HYLAS

A SERIES OF DRAWINGS BY F. G. NEWTON

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WITH TEXT BY

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LIST OF PLATES

(WITH THE PAGES OF THE TEXT IN WHICH REFERENCE IS MADE TO THEM)

PLATE		PAGE
XXXVII,	Plan	464
XXXVIII,	Section AA	466
XXXIX,	Section BB	470
XL,	Section CC	467
XLI,	Section DD	471
XLII,	Detail of Decoration of Vault and Apse	467
XLIII,	Detail of Decoration (female figure)	468
XLIV,	Detail of Decoration (Orpheus, etc.)	468
XLV,	Detail of Inscription	465
XLVI,	Detail of Decoration (Pediment)	467
XLVII,	Details of Architectural Decoration	467

THE COLUMBARIUM OF POMPONIUS HYLAS

THE COLUMBARIUM OF POMPONIUS HYLAS.

THE Columbarium of Pomponius Hylas is not by any means so well known as it deserves to be; for it is certainly one of the best preserved monuments of its kind, and it is with great pleasure that we are able to include in the present volume of the *Papers* of the School the interesting series of drawings by Mr. F. G. Newton. It is situated on the Via Latina, immediately before the Porta Latina of the Aurelian Wall, on the right-hand side going out (Lanciani, *Forma Urbis*, 46), in the former Vigna Sassi: it is, however, best approached from the Via Appia, inasmuch as the custodian of the tomb of the Scipiones keeps the key.

Previous excavations in the sixteenth century are mentioned by Flaminio Vacca (*Mem.* 100, ed. Fea), but nothing of importance was found. The monument in question was excavated in 1831, permission having been granted at the end of January of that year: its discovery was announced in a letter of Campana's bearing date March 28 of that year (*Atti del Camerlengato*, Tit. iv. fasc. 1460). The columbarium was approached, not from the Via Latina, but from a branch road running S.E. and passing in front of the entrance, according to Campana (tav. i. A, frontispiece, and p. 301), while Lanciani shows pavement on the N.W. side, on which Campana, in the frontispiece, seems to represent the remains of another tomb, so that this pavement is probably modern.

The road is probably referred to in the inscription on a travertine cippus found not far off *Cn(aei) Manli Cn(aei) liberti Nastae in agrum ped(es) xii lat(um) p(edes) iii via privata inter P(ublium) Rutilium* (*C.I.L.* vi. 5631). The meaning is that the road divided the property of the two persons mentioned; the measurements of the tomb are indicated in a curious way (cf. Mommsen, *in loc.*). The structure was found to be in a

very good state of preservation, and it was only necessary to repair the uppermost portion of the stairs, and add a roof to the entrance passage. The monument was described fully by Campana himself in a work entitled *Di Due Sepolcri Romani del Secolo di Augusto scoperti tra la Via Latina e l'Appia presso la tomba degli Scipioni* (Rome, 1840, folio) and reprinted in the *Dissertazioni della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia,* xi. (1852). The portion dealing with our tomb occupies pp. 257–313 (with frontispiece and eight plates). The description is a careful one, and the plates are good. There is also a short section relating to it in Nibby's *Roma nell' anno* 1838, Parte II. Antica, 556; and the inscriptions are given by O. Jahn, *Specimen epigraphicum in memoriam Olai Kellermann* (Kiel, 1841) and *C.I.L.* vi. 5539–5557. From them it appears that the columbarium was constructed about the time of Tiberius: the earliest inscription is *C.I.L. cit.* 5540, *Celadio Ti(beri) Caesaris Aug(usti) ser(vus) unctor Germanician(us) Pudens Ti(beri) Caesaris Aug(usti) pedisequ(u)s,* while another (*ib.* 5539) mentions two slaves of Octavia, the daughter of Claudius, and the first wife of Nero. *Paezusae Octaviae Caesaris Augusti f(iliae) ornatrici vix(it) ann(is) xviii. Philetus Octaviae Caesaris Augusti f(iliae) ab argento fecit contubernali suae carissimae et sibi.*

The only other inscription which gives an approximate date is *ib.* 5554, erected in honour of a freedman of Antoninus Pius—*T(ito) Aelio Aug(usti) lib(erto) Agathopo proc(uratori) (vicesimae) heredit(atium) Sulpicia Thallusa coniugi bene merenti et heredes fecerunt,* which is inscribed on the front of an urn, which was inserted later, the left-hand pilaster of the left-hand *aedicula* of the N.E. wall having been cut away to allow of its insertion. It is now in the Capitoline Museum (*Stanze Terrene a Sinistra,* iii. 6).

The rest of the inscriptions of the columbarium present no special interest from their contents; they fall in date between the two extremes mentioned.

Later inhumation burials have been made in the columbarium.

We may now describe the monument itself in fuller detail. Mr. Newton's drawings consist of—a plan of the whole (Plate XXXVII.), four sections (Plates XXXVIII.–XLI.), a plan of the ceiling (Plate XLII.), and five drawings of details (Plates XLIII.–XLVII.)

Owing to considerations of expense, it was not possible to reproduce more than four of the plates in colour: the rest are given in collotype.

The building is constructed of concrete faced with brick.[1] The stairs are of brickwork. In the wall in front is a small rectangular niche, the vault of which is decorated with pieces of calcareous incrustation (the so-called 'tartari') and round the arch is a line of marine shells. In the niche stood two fine two-handled cinerary urns of glass (Campana, tav. ii. Fig. AB).

The cinerary urn of Oratus (*C.I.L. cit.* 5558), which was found not far off, was placed there by Campana, and is shown in the drawing (Plate XXXVIII.) : *ib.* 5559, 5560 have also been deposited by him in the columbarium.

Below is a panel in coloured mosaic (shown in detail in Plate XLV.) with the inscription *Cn(aei) Pomponi Hylae Pomponiae Cn(aei) l(ibertae) Vitalinis* (*C.I.L. cit.* 5552). The *v* over the *P* of *Pomponiae* denotes that the latter was living. The ashes of these two persons, obviously husband and wife, were no doubt contained in the two glass urns ; and the columbarium may have belonged to them, the niches being sold to those who wished to buy : it seems less probable that it was built by subscription, as there is no mention of this in the inscriptions, which refer to people of various names, not belonging at all to the same *gens* or to the same household, as is the case with several other *columbaria* known to us. Almost all of them are of free condition, but their Greek cognomina betoken a foreign and no doubt a servile origin, even where it is not expressly stated, as it is in some cases, that they were freedmen.

At the bottom of the stairs the chamber itself opens to the right. It is partly excavated in the ground, and is lighted by a window in the barrel-vaulted roof, on the S.W. side, on which is the entrance : at the S.E. end is an apse.

The general appearance of the interior is given by the view in Campana's tav. i. We see that (except on the left, for reasons with which we shall immediately deal) there are two levels, each with its architectural framework : the urns are as a rule disposed in the niches in pairs, and

[1] Miss E. B. Van Deman kindly informs me that the brick facing, as well as most of the architectural details, is composed of sawn tiles about 0·035 metre thick, with a few square bricks 0·06 to 0·065 metre thick, the mortar being 0·015 to 0·017 metre thick, and that these measurements are quite typical of the time of Tiberius. What little is visible of the facing of a later period (on the N.E. side) consists wholly of cut tiles 0·035 to 0·038 metre thick, and must belong to the latter part of the reign of Tiberius, as the inscriptions (*infra*, 466) seem to indicate : there is no recurrence of a similar type of brick facing until the time of Trajan.

above the niches are rectangular panels painted red: the niches are vaulted, and above them rise triangular pediments, alternately small, when they have to cover one niche only, and larger in the middle of the long sides and in the apse, where the centre is not carried out to its full height, and a lower round pediment is substituted. This will be clear from the examination of the sections already cited. On the side on which the staircase descends, the arrangement is simpler, the niches being merely arranged in horizontal rows, without architectural framework. The roof has a simple barrel vault decorated with foliage in spirals (Plate XLII); and the apse has a semi-dome, similarly decorated, with a few figures interspersed.

We may begin a more detailed inspection with the N.E. side (Section AA, Plate XXXVIII.). Here there has been, as Campana saw (p. 272 *fin.*), an alteration of the original plan [1]: the two niches with pediments block up the smaller vaulted niches and have been introduced at a later period, while the characters of an inscription belonging to them (*C.I.L. cit.* 5551 (*V(ivus) Cn(aeus) Octavius Cn(aei) libertus Zethus sibi et suis. Octavia Cn(aei) l(iberta) Pithane*) are considered by Prof. Hülsen to belong to the first century A.D.[2]

We have already seen that *C.I.L. cit.* 5554 was inserted after the construction of the niche, and the same applies, as it would seem from Campana's account (p. 268), to *ib.* 5557. *Dis Manibus M(arci) Licini Fausti v(ixit) ann(is) iii m(ensibus) v d(iebus) xi Arruntia Sabina (de) s(uo) p(osuit)*, which is inscribed on an urn found near it, but overturned and out of place in Campana's day, and now in the Capitol (*Stanze Terrene a sinistra*, iii. 1).[3]

The details of the decoration of these two niches or *aediculae* are interesting. It is carried out in stucco relief and colour. In the pediment of the left hand one we see Chiron instructing Achilles in the art of playing the lyre; while in the frieze, of which the greater part is unfortunately destroyed, we see on the extreme left a figure of Cerberus, and on the right, Ocnus twisting the rope, with the ass eating it; while to the left of Ocnus are (Campana p. 270 and tav. ii. C) the remains of a female figure, possibly one of the Danaides. A detail of the capital is

[1] An idea of the original form of this side can be had from the section of the opposite side (Section BB, Plate XXXIX. cf. *infra*, 470).

[2] *Ibid.* 5541 *Dis manibus sacrum* he would assign from its content to the period from Augustus to Nero (see *C.I.L.* vi. p. 2900). The inscription itself has disappeared.

[3] Professor Hülsen assigns it to the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, A.D.

given in Plate XLVII. (top). The rough painting of foliage at the back of the niche is, as Campana points out, a good deal later.

The next niche is decorated with bright colours: an idea of its details can be obtained from Plate XLVII. (below), which gives the details of the moulding of the interior, and Plate XLVI., which shows the central portion of the pediment: the stucco of the pilasters of both niches has almost entirely perished. Besides the inscription of Octavius Zethus and Octavia Pithane, there was found there the cinerary urn (*Campana*, tav. vii. I) of L. Calpurnius Optatus (*C.I.L. cit.* 5555, 14178) with a representation of two *quadrigae*, now in the Capitoline Museum (*Stanze Terrene a sinistra*, iii. 6). Above was a very fine cinerary urn of glass, in the form of an amphora, which was eventually placed in the Vatican Library.

Standing on the pavement in front of the niche was a small terminal cippus with a head of the bearded Bacchus, which has also been removed there. The original document as to the purchase is in *Atti del Camerlengato,* Tit. iv. fasc. 1460. 200 scudi were paid for these objects, seven marble urns, the gold ornaments named below, and eleven terracottas.

To the right of this niche we see a part of the original construction with the right-hand portion of a pediment, the rest of which has given place to the two large *aediculae.* In the lowest niche Campana's drawing (tav. ii.) shows a square cinerary urn elegantly carved with the inscription *C.I.L. cit.* 5556 *Ti(berius) Claudius Ti(beri) f(ilius) Quir(ina tribu) Proclus v(ixit) a(nnis) vi.*

We now turn to the examination of the apse (Section CC, Plate XL.: Campana, tav. iii. iv.)

Here there has apparently been no alteration, the central *aedicula* belonging to the original structure, of which here and on the S.W. side we gain a clear idea. We notice that the triangular pediments at the side are broken so as to contain a circular pediment in the centre. They have, however, no figured decoration, only a simple and graceful architecture. The urns are placed in niches roofed with circular vaults, as a rule in pairs.

The decoration of the semi-dome of the apse is akin to that of the vault of the main chamber: a plan of the latter is given in Plate XLII.: it consists of intricate tendrils of foliage, with birds and winged putti (given in detail in Campana, tav. vi.) among them. In that of the apse, on the

other hand, we see three female figures, of which the central one is represented in detail in Plate XLIII., while those at the side are similar, but are winged. On the front of the arch is a narrow band of painting: below on the right and left are two male figures, partly draped, hovering in the air: that on the left holds a jug and a patera, as though pouring wine for the funeral banquet; while in the centre we see a mourning female figure (a slave, Campana thinks) on the right, and a kneeling male figure on the left. In the space between are four winged horses.

Over one of the niches on the right is the inscription of Paezusa,[1] which exactly fits the recess above the niche (*supra*, 464), and on the left, between the quadrangular recess and the niche, a tablet set up in memory of L. Licinius Nicephorus by his slaves Anicetus and Faustus (*C.I.L. cit.* 5549). Within the central *aedicula* are four terracotta urns, two sunk in the floor of the *aedicula*, and two in a niche behind, at a slightly higher level. On the wall on each side of this niche is painted a figure, a man on the left, a woman on the right; each is draped, and holds a roll in the left hand, and between them over the top of the niche is a *cista mistica*. Campana (p. 277) supposes, and I think with good reason, that they represent Granius Nestor and his wife. The *aedicula* rests on a base with broad moulding which contains a second niche within which are four more urns. Between this niche and the moulding is the inscription (*C.I.L. cit.* 5546) *Q(uintus) Granius Nestor fecit sibi et Vinileiae Hedoni coniugi bene m(erenti)*. In the tympanum of the pediment is a figure, which Campana (p. 282) identifies with Destiny, while on each side is a Triton sounding a conch, the curls of their tails filling up the angles of the tympanum. The frieze shows a scene of four figures, in red brown and bluish-grey. (Plate XLIV: the upper portion is that to the spectator's right.)

The scene which Campana interpreted, somewhat oddly, as the three Fates (without adequately explaining the male figure on the extreme right) should more probably be referred to the story of Orpheus among the Thracians.[2] Here we see Orpheus as musician wearing long priestly robes

[1] Within the urn was found a lamp with the inscription L. FAB(i) HERAC(li). This may be identical with that described as decorated with a bust of Isis, which was copied by Dressel in the Museo Gregoriano at the Vatican, its provenance being unknown (*C.I.L.* xv. 6432. a. 1). A representation of it is given by Campana tav. viii. F. (not iii. as in the text p. 276), from which it would seem that above the head of Isis are two peacocks (?) with two snakes between them.

[2] According to Mrs. Arthur Strong, who studied the paintings of the Columbarium on my behalf.

(*Threicius longa cum veste sacerdos,* Verg. *Aen.* vi. 644) seated, holding a seven-stringed instrument.[1] He is clad in a long tunic, with sleeves, and over this is an ample cloak drawn over the back of the head and tight across the knees. Orpheus also wears a wreath of long leaves, the species of which is uncertain. To the left of Orpheus, in a half-kneeling posture, perhaps part of a dance movement, appears one of the devoted Thracians, not in the attitude of ecstatic listener so common on the Greek vases, but supporting on one knee an oblong box which he holds open before Orpheus and from which the musician seems to be drawing a fresh string. The Thracian is clad in barbaric costume with trousers and wears on his head the ἀλωπεκῆ or foxskin cap which Campana in his drawing interprets as a lionskin (Campana, tav. iv.).[2]

The figure to the right of Orpheus is a dancing Bacchanal holding a thyrsus in the left hand, and with the right the end of a long fluttering scarf. This figure, which Campana takes to be female (the scarf lends colour to this supposition), seems to Mr. Newton to be male; in the obliterated condition of the painting the question must perhaps be left undecided. On the left, behind the Thracian, is an undoubted female figure, probably a Maenad, grasping one end of her cloak in each hand, and executing a sort of crouching movement which, like the movement of the Thracian, seems part of a dance; behind her is a small terminal image of Priapus with a thyrsus resting against its base. In accordance with the myth the Maenad should, as on the vases, appear hostile to Orpheus, but at this late date the artist's mythology was probably not quite clear, and he merely wishes to show Orpheus as Thracian singer amidst Thracians and Bacchic revellers, whether male or female.[3]

[1] On Greek vases of the fine period Orpheus appears in Greek costume, and on the vases of lower Italy, such as the great Amphora from Canosa in Munich (Furtwängler-Reichhold, Plate X.), he wears a semi-oriental robe with Phrygian cap. In later eclectic art he is sometimes robed, sometimes entirely nude. (See Gruppe in Roscher's Lex. iii. *s.v.* 'Orpheus' 1172–3.)—E. S.

[2] The ἀλωπεκῆ is the common headdress of the Thracians on Greek vases and is worn by Orpheus himself on the famous relief where he appears with Hermes and Eurydice. (See Gruppe, *l.c.*)—E. S.

[3] It is probable likewise that the representation on the stucco frieze of the first niche on the left-hand side, though of a later date (see *supra*, 466), illustrates the descent of Orpheus into Hades. On the left we possibly have to imagine the figure of Heracles chaining Cerberus. On the right is the group already noted above of the Danaid and Ocnus with the ass, an episode which in spite of the fact that it was painted by Polygnotus in his Nekyia (Paus. x. 39. 2) and by one Socrates at a later date (Plin. xxxv. 137) seldom occurs in extant monuments. The rare instances have been collected by Höfer (Roscher's Lex. iii. 823 ff.), and among them our Columbarium group, together with the analogous rendering of the same subject on the well-known relief from an altar or well-head

In the pavement, which is of 'cocciapista' (hard cement with fragments of broken tiles in it) in front of the *aedicula* in the centre of the apse, there was found a square slab of marble, with a hole in it for the introduction of a terracotta pipe. The stone was lifted, and bones without trace of combustion were found under it; so that the space was probably used for later and more confused burials, inasmuch as the bones belonged not to one individual, but to several.

We now turn to the S.W. or entrance side of the tomb (Section BB, Plate XXXIX.; Campana, tav. v.) which, as we have seen, gives us a good idea of the original condition of the N.E. side. The inscriptions are given by Campana (pp. 286, 287) and comprise *C.I.L. cit.* 5540—*supra*, 464—5543, 5544, 5547, 5548, 5550, 5553. The last of these inscriptions belongs to a niche having pilasters instead of columns, with a simple base below.

Under the pavement along this side a body was found buried within a terracotta sarcophagus: it was that of a woman, richly dressed, and when first opened was perfect, but soon perished on exposure to the air, some fine gold thread and fragments of a necklace remaining, with earrings and a gold pin. These were placed in the Vatican Library, as we learn from documents in the *Atti del Camerlengato*, Tit. iv. fasc. 1460 (cf. also *supra*, 467).

Under the stairs (Campana, tav. vi.) are a few ordinary double niches, and below them on the pavement level was a terracotta sarcophagus containing a body, covered with tiles. One would imagine that this and the other burials were later.

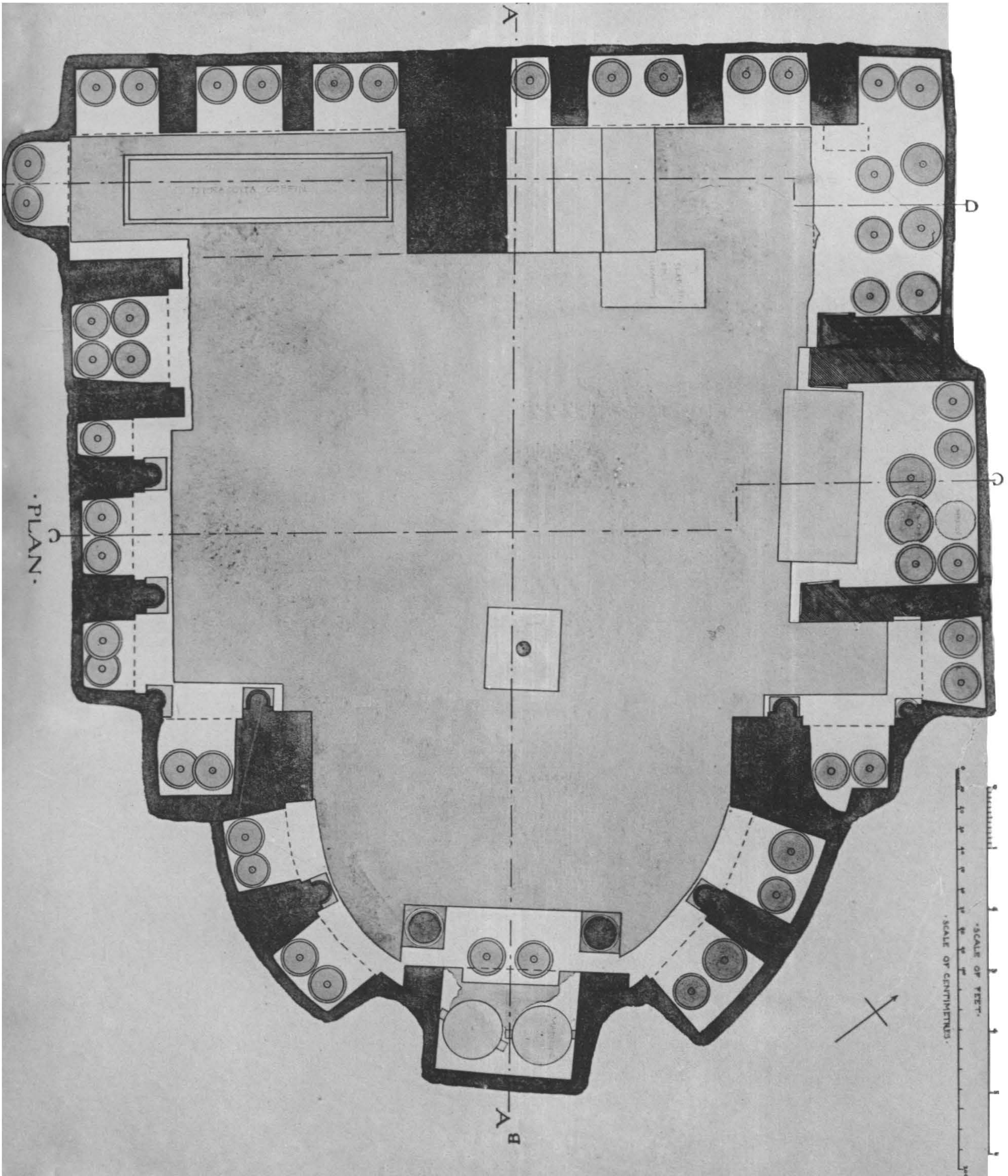
On the wall along which the stairs descend are similar niches, in simple rows, divided by stucco cornices, the space between them being

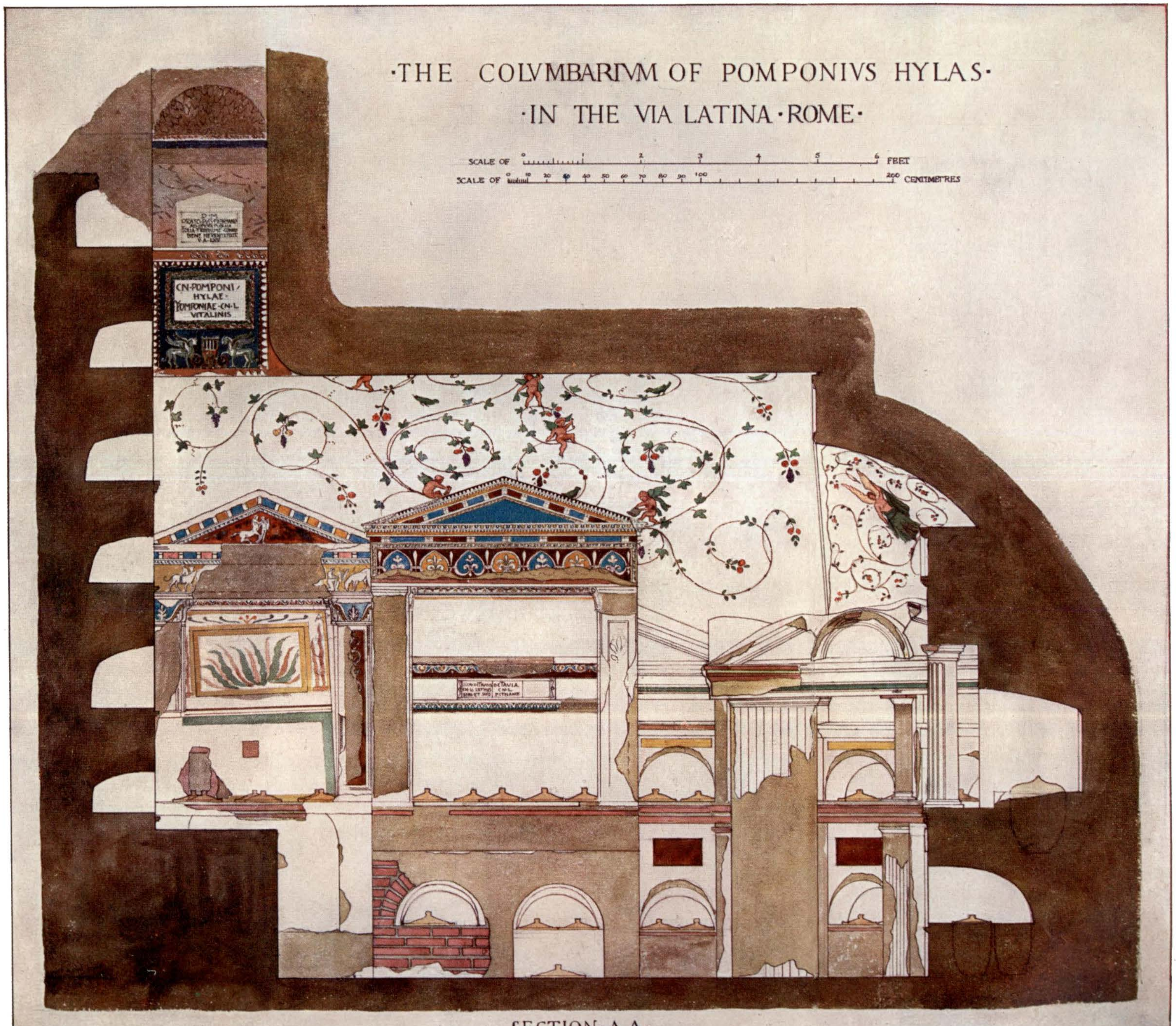
in the Galleria dei Candelabri in the Vatican (Helbig, 2nd ed. 379), has the prominent place. In the stucco picture Ocnus wears a sleeved chiton and a kind of trousers (on the Vatican relief he simply appears in classic garb with a cloak thrown round his left shoulder and lower limbs) and is in half-kneeling posture, actually twisting the rope while the ass stands in front of him gnawing it. Behind Ocnus is hilly ground which half conceals a female figure—the presumed Danaid—who is raising with her left hand one end of a drapery which passes across her back, and then falls to the front over her right arm; marshy ground seems indicated by the tall vegetation. This interesting and well-nigh unique representation has been often discussed, and reproduced from Campana's publication (see especially Otto Jahn in *Sächsiche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 1856, p. 268 and Pl. III. A; Bachofen *Versuch über die Gräbersymbolik der Alten*, Pl. I. p. 315; the literature is collected by Höfer, *loc. cit.*). Seeing the importance of the subject, and that the picture possesses besides considerable artistic merit, it is desirable that a reproduction in colour, on a larger scale than Mr. Newton's excellent drawing, should be made without loss of time. This is the more urgent as the stucco is peculiarly friable, and the picture has evidently suffered much since Campana's day.—E. S.

painted with foliage: above them are the usual panels painted red, and there was only one inscription (*C.I.L. cit.* 5542) found there, so that the great majority of the niches on this side lacked the names of those whose ashes had been placed within the urns. (Section DD, Plate XLI.)

Various terracottas, etc. found in walls of later construction in the neighbourhood of the *columbarium* are given by Campana (tav. viii.); but with these we will not at present deal: he also illustrates on the same plate (C, D, E, L) four of the more remarkable lamps found actually within the building.

·THE COLVMBARIVM OF POMPONIVS HYLAS·
·IN THE VIA LATINA·ROME·

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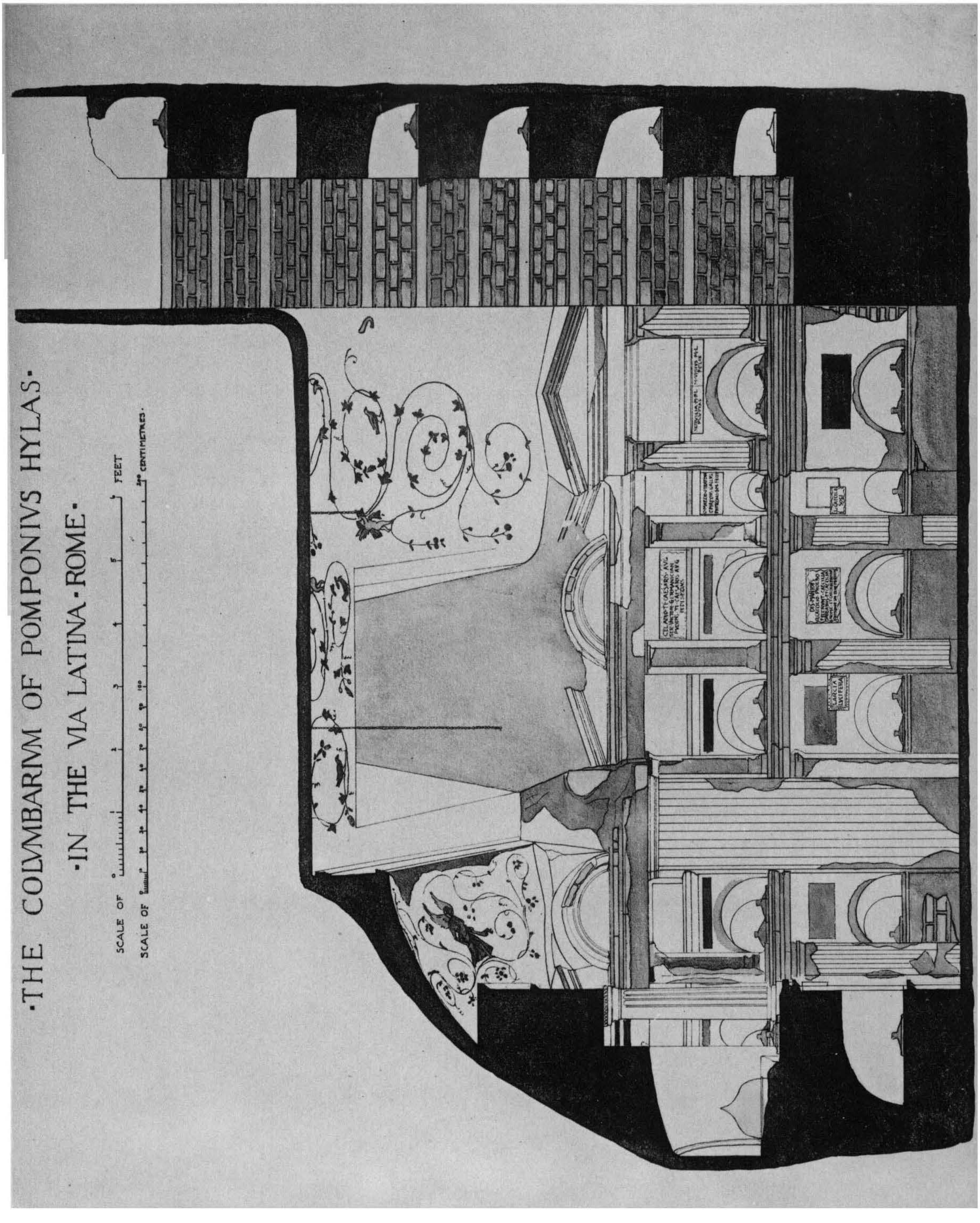
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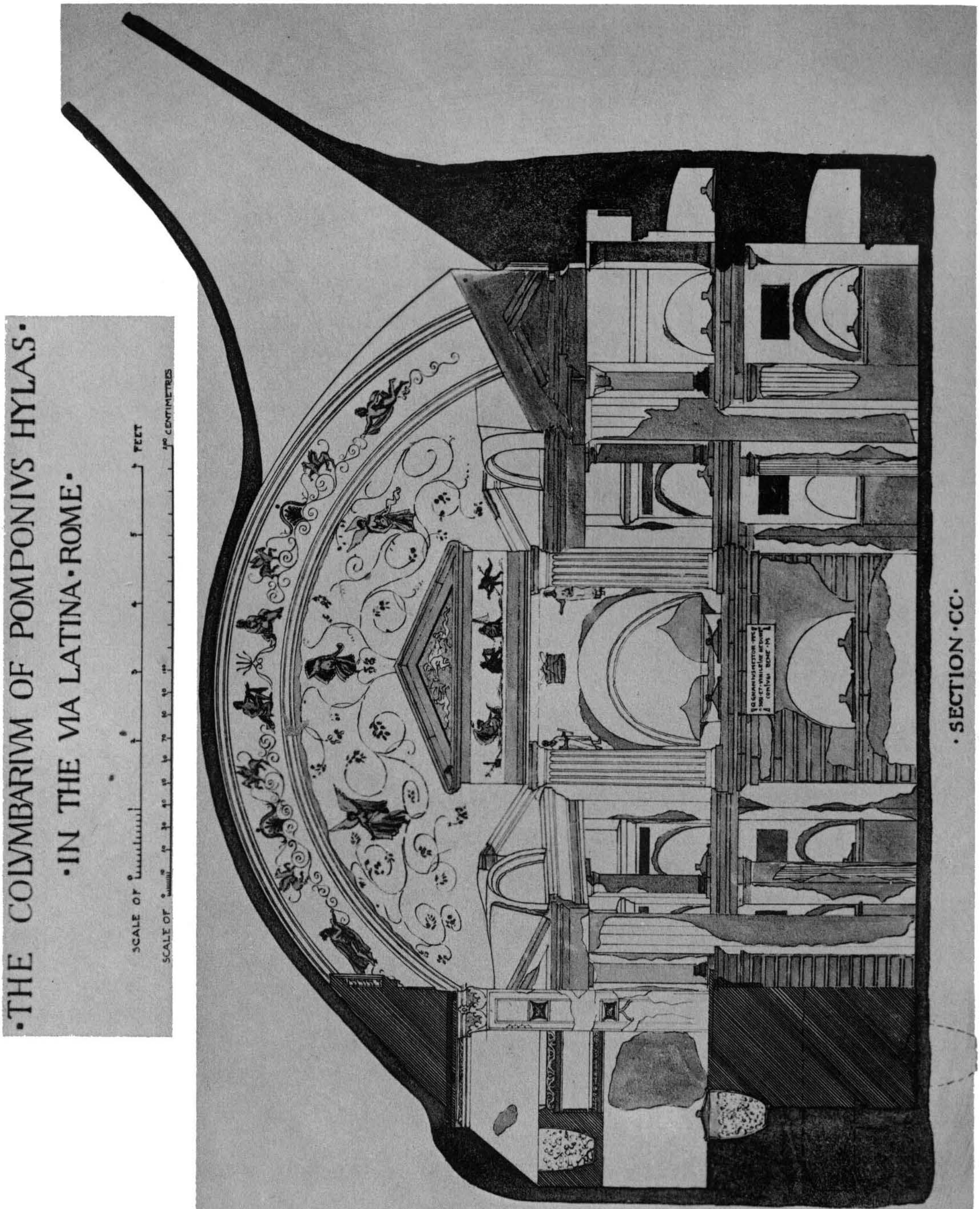
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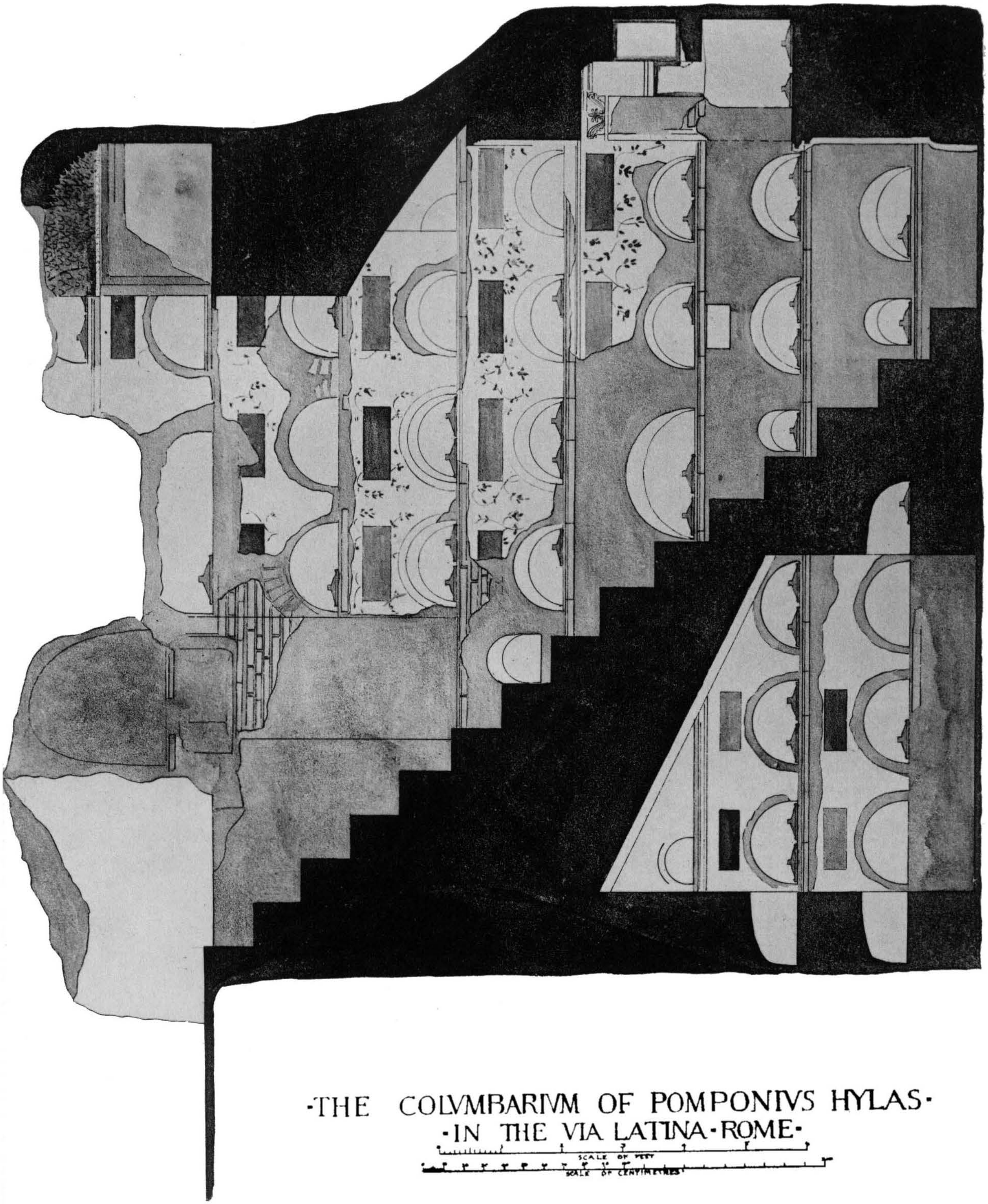
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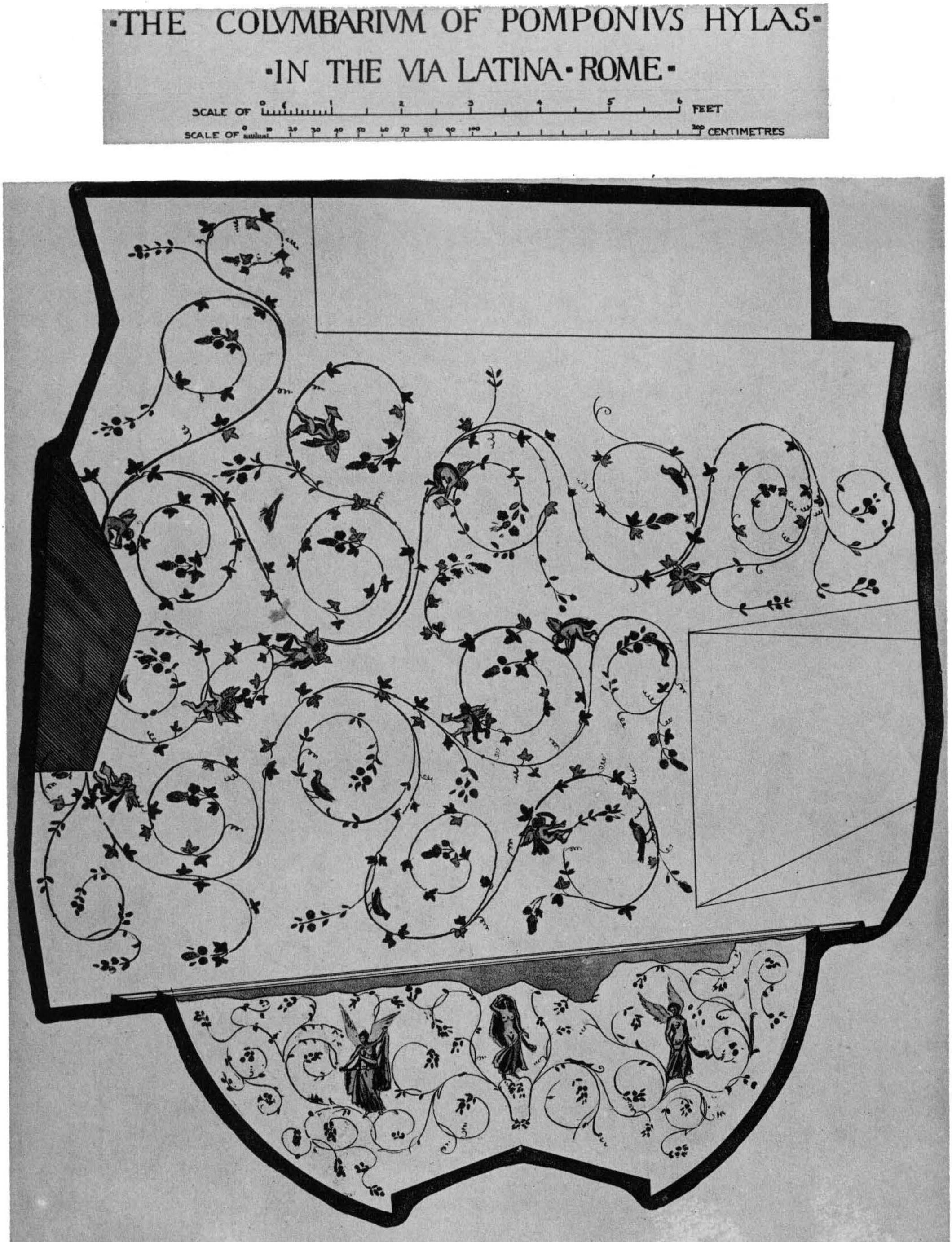
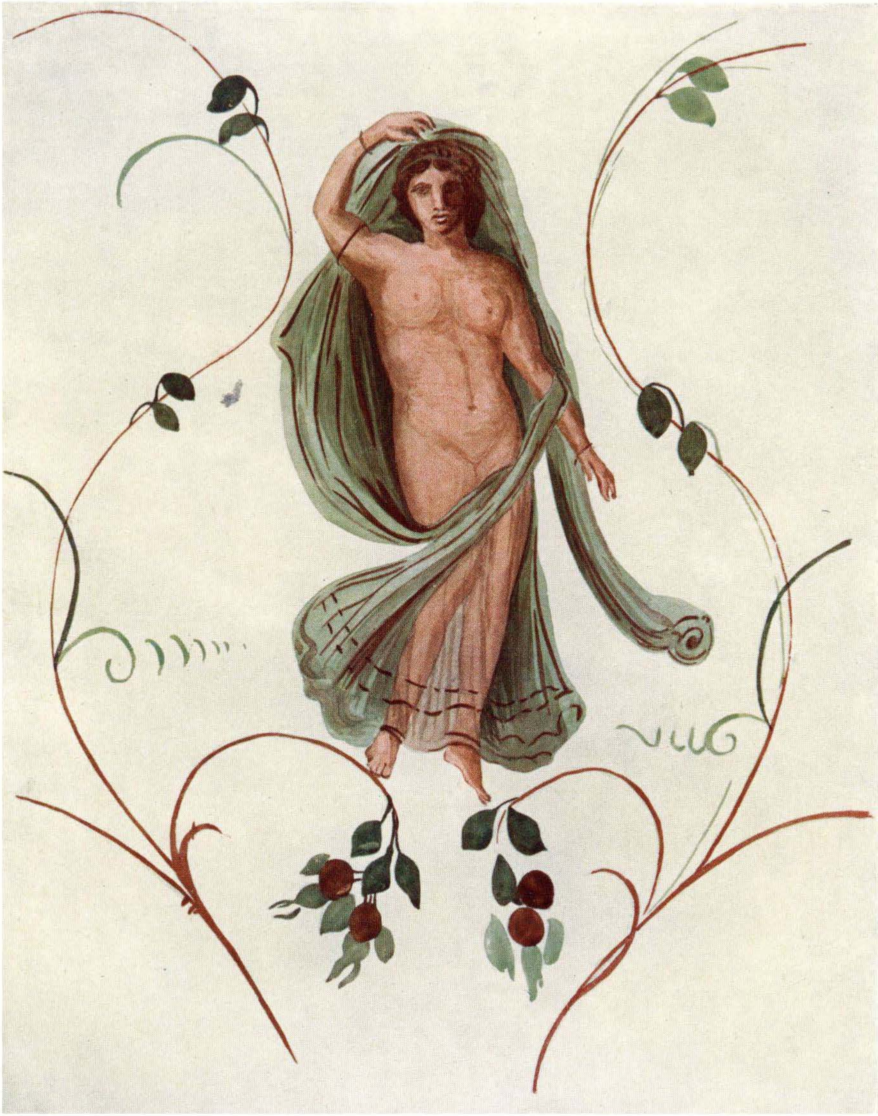
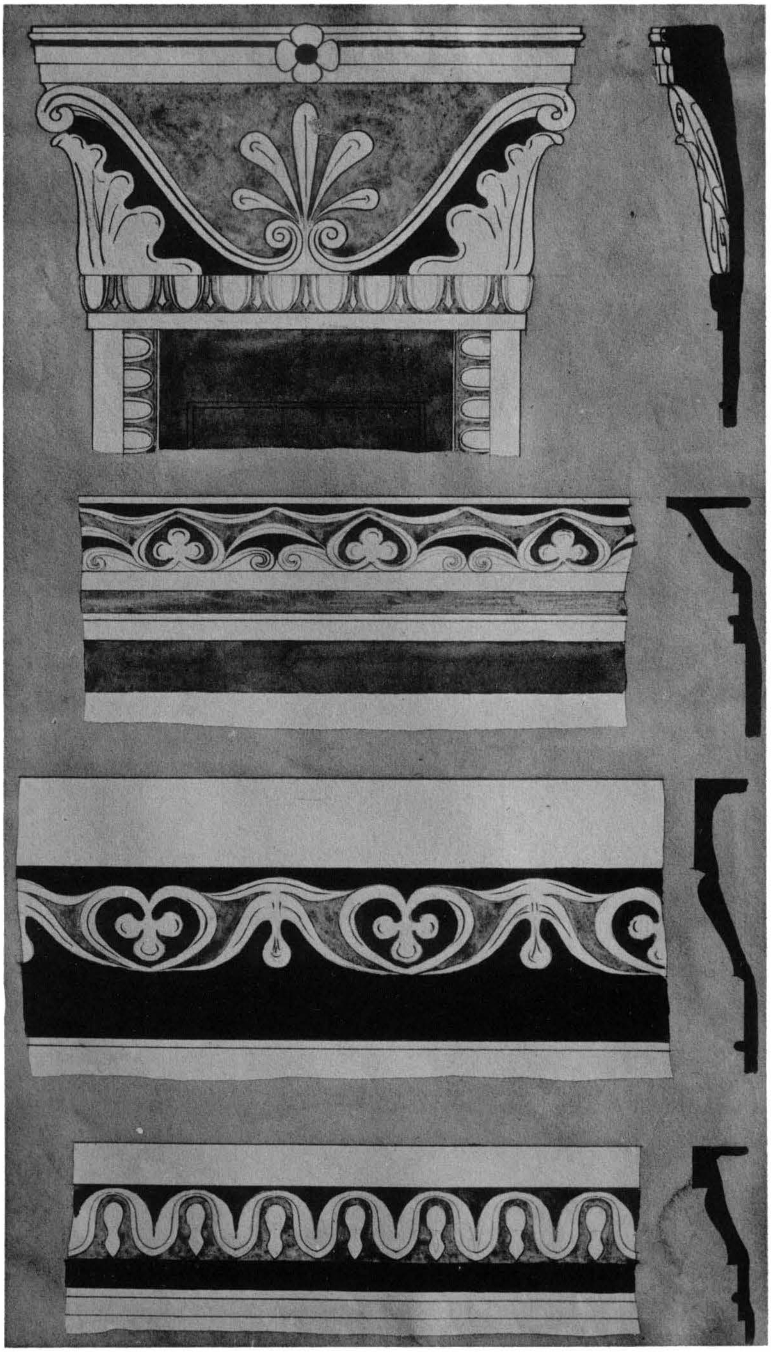
SECTION DD



Detail of decoration of vault and apse.



Detail of inscription.



Details of architecture.

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